

~~18.~~ ~~(Amended)~~ ~~The method of claim [17] 15, wherein the antibody is detectably labeled.~~

19. (Reiterated) The method of claim 18, wherein the detectable label is selected from the group consisting of a radioisotope, a fluorescent compound, a bioluminescent compound and chemiluminescent compound.

20. (Reiterated) The method of claim 15, wherein the detection is *in vitro*.

~~21.~~ ~~(Reiterated)~~ ~~The method of claim 20, wherein the antibody is detectably labeled.~~

~~22.~~ (Amended) The method of claim 21, wherein the label is selected from the group consisting of radioisotope, a fluorescent compound, a bioluminescent compound, a chemiluminescent [comound] compound and an enzyme.

Please add the following new claim:

~~--44. (New) A method of detecting abnormal expression of growth differentiation factor-12 (GDF-12) in the liver of a subject, comprising contacting an antibody that specifically binds to GDF-12 polypeptide having an amino acid sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO:12 with a specimen from the subject;~~
~~detecting binding of the antibody; and~~
~~comparing the amount of bound antibody in the specimen to the amount in a control specimen, wherein a difference is indicative of abnormal GDF-12 expression.~~